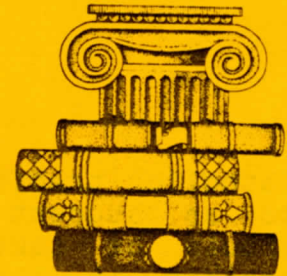




COLLOQUIA



SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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Edited by Margaret Canavan and Barbara McManus

The Catholic Nature of CNR

My writing this article for Colloquia was the result of Sonya Abbye's clear presentation on our identity and future directions in the October 15th issue. As I was unable to be at the Faculty Forum and participate in the discussion [see summary on p. 8], I offer these reflections in order to make more explicit the Catholic nature of the College. This dimension is multi-faceted and is expressed in the Mission Statement as the College's effort "to articulate its academic tradition and religious heritage (identified as Catholic) in ways that are consonant with the best contemporary understandings of both. It provides opportunities for spiritual growth in a context of freedom and ecumenism."

The key issue is how to articulate the Catholic heritage in a way that is consonant with the contemporary understanding of it. The key problem is that the understanding of Catholicism today embraces such a broad spectrum that it is anything but monolithic and therefore hard to define. One has only to reflect on the diversity of opinion expressed by the Catholic community on issues such as nuclear disarmament, birth control, the abortion question, homosexuality, interpretation of Scripture, to name but a few, to realize that there is within the Catholic community an on-going exploration of questions that touch every aspect of human life. There is a continual search on the part of individuals for what it means to be a Catholic in the contemporary world. One can engage in the search best in a context of freedom and ecumenical dialogue which a community of students and scholars of diverse backgrounds and religious traditions can provide.

In the practical order, how does this articulation express itself? Within the curriculum, it means that courses would always be offered for students coming from the Catholic tradition; these courses would present the foundation of that tradition and provide the opportunity for the student to engage in an exploration of its meaning in today's world. However, since Catholicism has its roots in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and shares common ground with other religious traditions, it cannot be studied in isolation. Furthermore, because religious studies is an academic discipline, it should of necessity reflect in its other curricular offerings opportunity to study these traditions. The other area in which articulation of this

Catholic tradition is to take place is in the area which is referred to as student services. In the practical order this means that care should be taken to provide special opportunities for prayer and worship in the Catholic tradition; this therefore calls for a firm commitment to a strong Campus Ministry. However, as the Mission Statement affirms that the College provides opportunities for spiritual growth in a context of freedom and ecumenism, the Campus Ministry should make every effort to respond as much as possible to the spiritual needs of students from other religious traditions.

I referred earlier to what I termed the multi-faceted dimension of the religious heritage. This is reflected, I believe, in that part of the Mission Statement which declares "with justice as its guiding principle, the College strives to respond to the needs of society through its educational programs and service activities." Therefore, if the College is true to its mission, it must commit itself to the pursuit of social justice, which would be reflected in the academic program as well as in the area of student services. The curriculum and campus activities would reflect a common concern for the promotion of peace and justice, especially for oppressed minorities and the poor, and for the struggle for equal rights for women, so in tune with the spirit in which the College was founded.

Although my primary purpose here was to address the religious heritage question, I would also like to speak to the question of the liberal arts/career education issue. The Mitchner statement that appeared in the New York Times a few weeks ago and the latest report from the former Secretary of Education stress once again the importance of the liberal arts. The latter statement is particularly strong in pointing out the weakness that has developed within higher education because of too narrow a focus on technical and professional training. Marketing our programs is certainly an issue, but if we were to analyze the career paths of our students just within the past ten years, I believe we would find that majors in the humanities (English, history, classics, language, philosophy, and religious studies) have pursued successful careers outside as well as within their own disciplines. Our product, to use a crass term, is and always has been our best "marketing tool." I would not like to see this focus shift because, as a matter of fact, the liberal arts education is what we do best. Furthermore, the education for service that the Mission Statement calls for is in many ways what liberal arts education is all about. The School of Arts and Sciences has been educating women for leadership since its inception, and that is its special prerogative. Let the women from the ranks of our alumnae speak for what the College does, and let them proclaim it through our advertising.

To end on a pragmatic note, the Mission Statement expresses the College's own definition of its identity and commitment; we can count on Arts and Sciences alumnae support, I believe, to the degree that this statement becomes a living reality in the curricular and co-curricular programs of the School. Other colleges can be small, liberal arts, women's colleges, but we can offer something unique in being faithful to our religious heritage. Furthermore, because of the on-going exploration of the meaning of Catholicism in the context of

freedom and ecumenism, we may have something to offer that other colleges who call themselves Catholic may not have. For me this means that the fact of the College's foundation by Ursuline nuns, dedicated to the education of women in the liberal arts and in professional studies, is more than historical data. It means that the original vision continues in a new articulation, accompanied by the on-going exploration so necessary and appropriate for the contemporary world.

Anne Bunting, osu

Student Life



It is with great interest that I have been following the unfolding discussion on the image of the College of New Rochelle, especially that of the School of Arts and Sciences, and on efforts to market that image which may ultimately decide its fate. While the many strengths of the College which have been cited include its size, one troublesome fact is that despite our small size our knowledge of how our work complements one another's goals seems to be lacking. This is an attempt to provide the College community with some background on the work of the Student Life Department.

The philosophy of the Department of Student Life is to promote student development through creating an environment which offers both challenge and support, built on a foundation of sensitivity to individual needs and differences. The Department strives to promote an overall sense of community through providing students with opportunities to develop increasing responsibility. Individual educational growth is facilitated through the provision of educational programming and an atmosphere conducive to academic development. Personal growth is enhanced through role modeling of responsible adult behavior. An overall goal of the Department of Student Life is to assist students in making life choices and helping to prepare them for the transition from students to autonomous individuals who are equipped to contribute to society.

The manner in which our philosophy is implemented is based on the "S.P.A.R." Model of Student Life, which is an acronym for Services, Programs, Advocacy, and Research. Through the provision of services, the coordination of programs, acting as advocates on behalf of students, and the conducting of research on student needs, our philosophy has acquired a dynamic quality, reinforcing our foundation for success.

Actions taken by Department staff members are usually made within this framework. As one example of how our philosophy has been implemented, an On-going Orientation program was established for new SAS students through the cooperative efforts of the Student Life staff, the Counseling staff, the Learning Skills Center, and faculty and staff of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Another example of a joint effort which achieved positive results was the action taken in conjunction with the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs which culminated in the virtual elimination of triple rooms for freshman students in our residence halls. This year there are only seven triple rooms in the dorms where CNR students reside. Each of those triple arrangements is by student choice and is based on individual financial considerations.

In this light, it is encouraging to learn that the SAS faculty and staff are interested in developing a more collegial relationship with those of us in student services. From resident fellows to editorial mentors, the potential for future collaborative efforts is seemingly limitless, and the beneficiaries would include not only individual departments but also the students and the College as a whole. If living and learning is to be the focus of the school's newly defined "image," we are well trained and prepared to put that image into practice. Not only are we prepared, we have already begun. The dialogue has been initiated; let us move forward together.

Robert A. Bonfiglio, Director, Student Life

The Image of a Woman Liberal Arts Graduate



Close your eyes and image what a woman liberal arts graduate looks like. Seriously, please do this before continuing to read; you are guaranteed to get more out of this article if you do so. This was the question that Marilyn Massey posed to our newest arrivals, the class of 1988, at one of their early On-going Orientation sessions. Each freshman who attended this particular meeting with Marilyn was asked by her to describe her image on paper and hand it in.

There is no claim here that the students who were present that day are a representative sample, but there is a claim that the statements listed here are representative of what was submitted:

The woman liberal arts graduate is stylish, but not fanatically so. She's open to new ideas. . . . She is mature in the face and well-groomed.

A liberal arts woman I think looks like many teachers today--tall, long hair, wearing a skirt (straight), a blouse, pumps, and light make-up.

She is wearing a very long skirt that's below her knee, but a little above her ankle--wearing glasses, a high collar blouse, a very intelligent woman, a person who studies classics, English.

freedom and ecumenism, we may have something to offer that other colleges who call themselves Catholic may not have. For me this means that the fact of the College's foundation by Ursuline nuns, dedicated to the education of women in the liberal arts and in professional studies, is more than historical data. It means that the original vision continues in a new articulation, accompanied by the on-going exploration so necessary and appropriate for the contemporary world.

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She's dressed fashionably, but businesslike, and she knows which direction she's taking.

She reminds me of a school teacher. She has on a very distinguished suit. About 35 years old.

She is wearing a tailored suit and carrying a briefcase filled with papers. She will most likely be holding her tortoise shell glasses in her hands.

A liberal arts woman wears a business suit that is blue. She has an off-white blouse and pearls on. Her air is subtle. Her manner is calm. She has an intelligent look in her eyes. She has off-white sheer nylons on and simple yet neat shoes on. Her earrings are gold but not gaudy. AND SHE HAS AN ENGAGEMENT RING ON HER FINGER.

A woman liberal arts graduate looks like me in 4 years. Maybe a little unsure of where she's going, but well-rounded.

A person void of any main field of interest: "LIMBO," existing without direction.

A woman liberal arts major looks self-confident but not over-bearing--still feminine. She knows a lot of things, but especially knows herself.

She is wearing a suit. She is conservative. She is smart and unemployed. She is broke because she spent so much money on her degree.

Well-kept, not overweight, with 5 kids, confident and independent.

The woman liberal arts graduate looks to me like Rhoda Morganstern.

The woman with a liberal arts degree is void of direction, leading to marriage and Burger King.

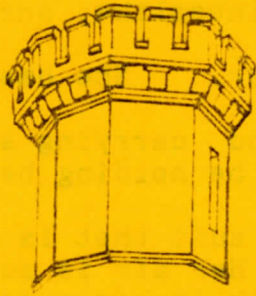
These statements resist summarization, but they do challenge us women faculty members to ponder such questions as these: What kind of role models are we perceived to be? What are the values, the expectations, the anticipations of students whom we will attempt to direct in our respective disciplines? How do we ourselves describe the image of the liberal arts graduate we hope for and will work towards instilling in these very students during the years they are with us? What do we think these images symbolize?

A work-study student, class of 1986, was asked to read all the statements and do a brief compilation. Instead, this is what she wrote:

There cannot be one description of a liberal arts graduate. People come in all sizes, shapes, and styles. A typical description would be the "business" or "office" look, but anyone could achieve this look. One doesn't have to be a liberal arts graduate. That is just a dress code that many offices require. I know many people with degrees who couldn't care less about their code of dress. They just don't conform to rules--that's all. It would be rather illogical to judge a liberal arts graduate by the way she dresses.

Here's to Commencement 1988 . . .

Kristen Wenzel, osu



EX REGIA

The following is the talk I gave at Open House. Since it is about you, my colleagues, I thought you might like to read it. If you have any suggestions for how I can better articulate the uniqueness of SAS in the future, please pass them on to me.

It is a joy to be able to greet you today and to describe the School of Arts and Sciences to you. I want to begin by telling you what struck me first when last spring I, like you, was looking at the College.

Names of programs in catalogues tell you very little about a college because programs are in reality people. What impressed me immediately about the College of New Rochelle was its people, its faculty.

Here I found prize-winning and nationally noted artists in the art department, authors in the social sciences and humanities, scientists in the division of natural sciences and mathematics, and journalists and media experts in communication arts. I found that they had taught alumnae among whom are a Pulitzer Prize winner, the head of a department at Boston University medical school, a high-ranking official in the federal government, a vice president of a multi-national insurance firm and, to my delight, the producer of the television drama Dynasty. Thus I found how well this faculty has transmitted its high level of achievements to its students, and I discovered how and why they can do this.

The members of this faculty are not only accomplished within their fields, they are accomplished, in a way that I have rarely seen, as teachers. They want to know each of their students. They know how to involve each of them in the process of her own learning and to draw out her unique talents and potential.

I found out that learning at the College of New Rochelle is not a passive process in which students merely record and take in information from experts. It is an active and interactive process in which the lively intellectual energies of creative faculty are shared with those of students. The result is that here higher education is what it should be.

This week a panel established by the National Institute of Education issued a report on higher education in this country. It says that U.S. colleges are not realizing their full potential and that there is a gap between the ideal of education and what actually takes place in colleges. The report identifies that gap in terms of a

false definition of excellence. Wrongly, it says, excellence has been defined in terms of inputs, or the quantitative statistics of how much money, how many books of faculty, how many degree programs, how many courses a college offers. What this definition overlooks is output or outcomes, that is, "what students actually learn and how much they grow as a result of higher education."

Over the twenty years of my teaching career in both public and private institutions, I have been sensitive to that gap, and last year I set out to find a college in which it did not exist, where on the contrary the ideal of education was realized. I found it here. Education here is student-centered. Its goal is the development of each student's particular talents. Here I found faculty, like myself, who know that nothing, not even a breakthrough in one's field of study, is more exciting than fostering the growth of students' competencies and self-confidence.

I want to say a few words about how our curriculum and overall environment at the College of New Rochelle foster competence and self-confidence. Here two worlds intersect--the rich world of scientific and cultural knowledge, which a liberal arts curriculum presents, and today's world, the world in which women are finding new roles and life patterns. Our educational process is open to both worlds, and that means that we integrate the precious knowledge of historical, religious, and philosophical traditions, the invaluable knowledge of science and mathematics, with preparation for meaningful and successful careers for women. Every field of study from business to philosophy helps its majors identify career possibilities, introduces them to successful alumnae, and in many cases offers them opportunities of internships in places like the United Nations, NBC, and businesses such as Avon.

To have the support for this type of integration of the liberal arts with practical and significant work experience and career planning is an invaluable component of education for women today. As you know, the majority of women in our society look forward to having both a family and a career. At the College of New Rochelle we offer a context in which a young woman can prepare for both a successful personal and professional life because here she will meet every day teachers and alumnae who understand and are living the kind of life for which she is preparing.

We believe here, as I am certain you do, that having deeply held religious and ethical values and being able to act on them is what grounds a happy and successful personal life. And we believe that having the confidence, the wisdom, and the courage to carry those values over into a successful public life is essential for our students and for our society in general. This faculty is extraordinary for having achieved the integration of those values in their own lives and work and thus offering, in the air we all breathe, priceless resources for students' growth and development.

Let me end with a quote from one of our faculty, Teri Gamble, chair of communication arts. Professor Gamble says, "At the College of New Rochelle, we have the future of women in mind." We see that future as a new and exciting one, and we feel privileged and invigorated to be dedicated to fostering it.

We would welcome having you join us. We want you to know that we would be excited to have your future in mind.

Marilyn Chapin Massey

Faculty Forum, October 17, 1984

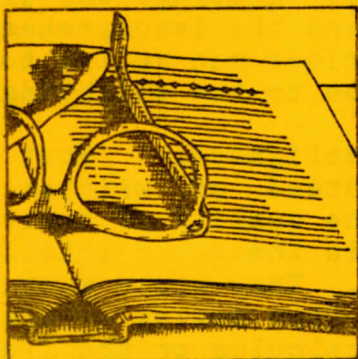
Dean Massey opened the discussion with some general observations, articulating the distinction between career education and vocational training; the former educates women for freedom, offering them at least the opportunity to choose a role in the public sphere. She made three specific recommendations: 1) that we establish a mentoring program, setting up a strong network relationship between alumnae and students, especially regarding careers; 2) that we gather and articulate what we have already done in the career preparation area; 3) that we build into the advisement process ways to encourage and help students to develop a sense of professional identity.

The subsequent discussion centered mostly on the Catholic nature and heritage of CNR. A number of faculty noted the difficulty in clarifying what is meant by the phrase "a Catholic college," since to many the term still conveys the image of "a convent school," a strong sectarian bias, a narrow focus and purpose. If we use the term "Catholic college" in our advertising, can we be sure of the signals we will be sending to prospective students? Does this term adequately describe the nature of the school today? Would the term be a marketing liability?

On the other hand, some pointed to the Mission Statement, which mentions our Catholic heritage; we should not deny what we are and have always been. Indeed, many felt that the majority of the SAS students still come from Catholic backgrounds. Perhaps the answer is to stress our commitment to values, the fact that we offer a total learning experience, including moral and ethical development, commitment to community and service. It was mentioned that many employers give CNR high marks for producing quality students with a strong sense of values, students who make dedicated, conscientious employees. Would terms such as "ecumenical" or "humanistic" describe our nature without raising sectarian fears? Perhaps we should emphasize ourselves as an intellectual community within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, a community dedicated to the future of women (noting the reputation of our Ursuline founders in this area).

Several faculty commented that successful advertising often depends on developing a general message that will appeal to all markets, and then tailoring specific messages to the interests of smaller groups. Perhaps our general statement could stress our commitment to values, with specific advertising for Catholic markets focusing on our strong support for those who wish to understand and practice Catholicism through the curriculum, Campus Ministry, co-curricular activities, etc. In addition, we need to emphasize our diversity, the beauty of our campus, the quality of our programs, and especially the strength of our faculty.

Reported by Barbara McManus



EXCERPTA

William V. Shannon, "The New Barbarians," New York Times.

"More students are attending college and more money is being spent on higher education by their parents and by society than ever before. But there is great danger that much of this investment of time and money is being squandered because many college faculties and college administrations are intellectually irresponsible and incompetent."

"In countless colleges, the retreat from responsibility is far advanced. Required courses are abolished. The teaching of the traditional curriculum in the arts and sciences is abandoned, in whole or in part. Written examinations and formal grades disappear. Students, including freshmen, are invited to 'design your own courses.' Even when students begin to concentrate in some field of study, they may find that what used to be regarded as a major has lost its coherence and they are instead encouraged to slosh about in that primordial ooze known as 'interdisciplinary studies.'"

"Yet there is no mystery about what a college-educated person should know. It is not necessary to agree entirely with Robert M. Hutchins and the advocates of the 'Great Books' to recognize that there are books every college graduate ought to have read and ideas he ought to be familiar with. An educated person should have studied literature, physical science, mathematics, history, philosophy, religion, music, art and the social sciences and know at least one foreign language."

"Since there is not time in four years to learn everything that is worth knowing about all these important subjects, college should be a period of intense hard work, rigorous, concentrated and at times exhausting. Intellectual opportunities lost then may never be regained. The books not read, the ideas not mastered, the specific knowledge not acquired may never become part of one's intellectual endowment."

"If all this is as self-evident as it surely seems, why then are so many colleges in flight from their intellectual responsibility?"

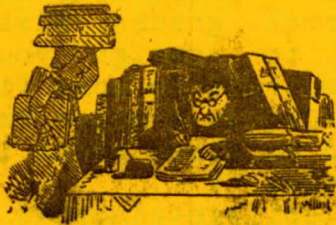
"Unfortunately, education attracts an abnormal share of mediocre persons with little exact knowledge or useful talent. Men and women who cannot teach physics or Greek or history, who cannot heal a sick child or build a bridge or write a poem, such persons too often find a living in the intellectual wasteland of educational theory and educational administration. The one thing they can do is verbalize and generate a smog of memoranda."

"Sooner or later, they wear down and override serious teachers and scholars who get bored with long committee meetings and circular arguments about the trivial, the abstract and the incomprehensible. Developing a protective mask of cynicism, serious men retire to their academic specialities, leaving the curriculum to the blighting touch of the so-called innovators."

"Many, though not all, students are delighted. Most young Americans are extraordinarily verbal. Instead of written examinations, they would prefer to be judged on the quality of their class participation. They rarely know what is in their own intellectual best interest for the whole of their lives. They would much rather talk about homosexuality or the new wave in film making or the urban crisis than study irregular French verbs or calculus or the Treaty of Utrecht. There is nothing wrong with discussing sexual mores or movies or the urban crisis, but that is what students have bull sessions for and why they read newspapers and magazines. It is not why they go to college."

"The responsibility lies with the administration and the faculty. The intellectual devitalization which has ruined many good high schools across the country is now spreading rapidly into the colleges. The result can only be a swelling tribe of New Barbarians, armed with college degrees and glib phrases but ignorant. If many parents are uneasy, they have good reason."

Submitted by Margaret Canavan



LINGUA

Lingua turns philosophical this month with Raymond Smullyan, 5000 B.C. and Other Philosophical Fantasies (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), freely drawing from a chapter entitled "Miscellaneous Fragments," described by its author as a "light-hearted, rambling collection of miscellaneous observations, anecdotes, . . . jokes, puzzles, and paradoxes."

1

Self-annihilating sentences . . . that somehow manage to defeat themselves:

Before I begin speaking, there is something I would like to say.

Having lost sight of our goal, we must redouble our efforts!

I've given you an unlimited budget, and you have already exceeded it!

Authorized parking forbidden!

Inflation is an economic device whereby each person earns more than the next.

Superstition brings bad luck.

You've outdone yourself as usual.

Monism is the theory that anything less than everything is nothing.

A formalist is one who cannot understand a theory unless it is meaningless.

A Question of Semantics. At a seminar that he was giving, the late philosopher Alan Ross Anderson told the following fascinating incident: Anderson was working for the navy during World War II with a group deciphering Japanese code. They had great difficulty deciphering one word (represented by a number) that kept coming in repeatedly. It was soon apparent that the word was an adjective applying to people and nations ("This nation is _____, but that nation is not _____."). After much data were received, they finally decoded it as pro-Japanese. At the end of the war, the code book was captured, and the true meaning of the word was sincere.

Speaking of proofs of the existence of God, the funniest one I have ever seen was in a term paper handed in by a freshman. She wrote, "God must exist because he wouldn't be so mean as to make me believe he exists if he really doesn't!" Is this argument really so much worse than the ontological proofs of the existence of God provided by Anselm and Descartes, among others?

A philosopher once had the following dream: First Aristotle appeared, and the philosopher said to him, "Could you give me a fifteen-minute capsule sketch of your entire philosophy?" To the philosopher's surprise, Aristotle gave him an excellent exposition in which he compressed an enormous amount of material into a mere fifteen minutes. But then the philosopher raised a certain objection that Aristotle couldn't answer. Confounded, Aristotle disappeared. Then Plato appeared. The same thing happened again, and the philosopher's objection to Plato was the very same as his objection to Aristotle. Plato also couldn't answer it and disappeared. Then all the famous philosophers of history appeared one by one, and our philosopher refuted every one with the same objection. After the last philosopher vanished, our philosopher said to himself, "I know I'm asleep and dreaming all this. Yet I've found a universal refutation for all philosophical systems! Tomorrow when I wake up, I will probably have forgotten it, and the world will really miss something!" With an iron effort, the philosopher forced himself to wake up, rush over to his desk, and write down his universal refutation. Then he jumped back into bed with a sigh of relief. The next morning when he awoke, he

went over to the desk to see what he had written. It was, "That's what you say!"

Cartesian philosophy is the philosophy of René Descartes. Descartes first set out to prove his own existence. His proof is remarkably short; it consists of only three Latin words: "Cogito, ergo sum," that is, "I think, therefore I am." When I first heard this, I couldn't resist writing the following verse:

I think, therefore I am?

Could be!

Or is it really someone else who only thinks he's me?

The composer Paul Hindemith was once conducting a rehearsal of one of his more dissonant orchestral compositions. At one point, he rapped his baton and said, "No, no, gentlemen; even though it sounds wrong, it's still not right!"

I once heard a radio interview with the pianist Artur Schnabel. On the whole, the interviewer struck me as incredibly trite and stupid. Out of the blue, he asked, "Mr. Schnabel, do you believe in God?" There was a tense pause. "No," replied Schnabel, quite definitely. "You see, what I believe in is something much greater!"

This anecdote reminds me of a riddle. What is it that's greater than God; the dead eat it, and if the living eat it, they die? [If you can't figure out the answer, ask Barbara McManus, who looked it up]

I read in some philosophy book or other that perhaps the one true philosopher was the little girl of nine who was looking out a window and suddenly turned to her mother and said, "But what puzzles me is why there is anything at all!" The following comments, made by children I have known, have definite philosophical overtones.

Vincent (aged 3). When Vincent was about to go up in an airplane for the first time, he asked his father, "When we go up, will we also get small?"

Barry (aged 5 or 6). Barry once said, "I hope I never get to be ninety-nine!" "Why?" I asked. "Because when you get that old, you could die!"

Miriam (aged 8). Miriam is the daughter of a mathematical logician. She has either inherited or acquired many of her father's characteristics. At one point during dinner, her father said, "That's no way to eat, Miriam." She replied, "I'm not eating Miriam!"

David (aged 10). My wife and I were once with David's family at a drive-in theater. The first feature was excellent, but the second feature looked as if it were going to be terrible. One of the adults suggested that we leave. David of course wanted to stay, and so an argument began. "Why don't we take a vote?" I suggested. "No!" said David. "That's not fair because the majority will win!"

Here is a little paradox: YOU HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THIS SENTENCE. Do you have any reason to believe the above sentence or don't you?

Have you heard the business executive's paradox? It was invented by the literary agent Lisa Collier of Collier Associates. The president of a firm offered a reward of \$100 to any employee who could provide a suggestion that would save the company money. One employee suggested, "Eliminate the reward!" [This is not to be submitted to the Idea of the Year contest--Ed.]

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Lingua would welcome submissions from other departments of material taking a light-hearted and entertaining look at language and scholarship. The deadline for the next issue of Colloquia is December 7.



O ACT
OF KINDNESS, NO MATTER HOW
SMALL, IS EVER WASTED.